

Newscasts

March, 2004 Serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



Beware the Ninth of March

The March Madness Auction is nearly upon us and we are once again blessed with a tremendous assortment of generous donations. A full list of auction items was not available at press-time. The truth of the matter is that the impromptu manner in which these donations magically arrive on Auction Night obviates any kind of advanced notice.

We all have an opportunity to make some of that magic happen on March 9th by showing up with a cool donation. Surely you have a fishing related gem whose true value is lost on you. Now is the time to ditch it. When all is said and done, you will have more room in your house and the chapter will have more cash in the coffers. Books that you have read, rods that you no longer use, and even waders that you are too lazy to patch, can all make fabulous donations. One person's trash really can be another person's treasure. Even if nobody treasures it, our crew of shamelessly unscrupulous auctioneers will see to it that somebody pays. Flies are always a welcomed donation too. Please bring some flies.

Joining us on March 9th will be the sleaziest trio of auctioneers that decorum permits. The *services* of Dr. Sausage, Colonel Muskrat, and Ole Svenson, have once again been secured. What they lack in morals, skill, intellect, talent, and good looks, are made up for in levity, and commitment. They will do their level best to insure that your donations fetch top dollar. With that said, all attendees are encouraged to scratch all of their itches and adjust all of their undergarments prior to the auction, lest they become unwitting bidders. The money raised from this event will be added to our treasury and used to help protect, preserve, and restore the coldwater resources right here in southern Wisconsin.

Please join us – there are bargains to be had and a good time is always had by all. Dinner and a swap meet will begin about 6:00 PM. The auction will start at 7:03 pm. As always, you will find us at the Maple Tree Restaurant on Highway 51 in beautiful downtown McFarland.

From the (Suddenly) Past-President by Bill Pielsticker

On February 9, 2004, I resigned as SWTU chapter president. This followed my selection as chair of the Wisconsin Council for Trout Unlimited. In my new position, I will continue to work on the same types of issues I have in the last several years: legislation and regulations that will protect our trout streams, habitat improvement projects, raising the visibility of TU's work, and a variety of things that can strengthen this and other chapters in the state.

In accordance with our by-laws, vice president Sue Fey became chapter president when I resigned. I know that Sue will provide great leadership, and I encourage you to give her at least as much support as you gave me. In the meantime, you'll still find me lurking around at chapter meetings and events, keeping an ear open for your comments and suggestions. Thank you for your support.

First SWTU Workday of 2004

Our fearless project leader, Tom Ehlert, has scheduled the first workday of 2004. Under his direction, phenomenal progress was made along the lower reaches of Garfoot Creek in 2003. On the inaugural workday of the new season, that project will be taken up where it was left off. The task at hand is to cut and haul brush from that portion of the stream that flows through the Festge farm.

Please meet at the Scherbel road bridge just south of Salmo pond at 8:30 AM on March 27th. Work will be concluded at 12:00, and lunch will commence immediately. Speaking of lunch, give Tom a call at 767-2413 if you plan to attend. He appreciates knowing how much food to prepare.

Conservation Congress Meetings

The Spring Wildlife & Fish Rules Hearings and Annual Conservation Congress Meeting are scheduled for April 12, 2004. Though there are no trout issues of statewide significance this year, your participation in the democratic process is encouraged. Hunters should always attend, and some of our sister organizations (e.g. Smallmouth Alliance) need us there. The rule changes under consideration may be previewed on the web at: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/nrboard/congress/springhearings/2004/index.htm>

From the (new) President

By Sue Fey

Greetings chapter members and friends, It's a bit daunting to follow Bill's well informed and thoughtful commentaries on conservation issues these past few years. Friends will describe me as "never in doubt, frequently mistaken", which either suggests I need new friends, or that I should be seeking advice, expertise and possibly legal counsel as I waded into the freestone stream of TU issues. Happily, this chapter is teeming with knowledgeable and experienced spokesmen on the issues that concern us, and I will be relying on all of you as our agenda evolves.

Something I do know a lot about happens to be a core value of this organization. Mentoring is the short answer to why I'm writing this article as Chapter President tonight. It's also one of the most important and deeply satisfying aspects of my fishing life, and maybe yours too...

I started fishing when I was five or six on Deerskin Lake, near Eagle River, where my family spent 3 weeks every August for a decade. It was my Mother who got up with me at dawn and rowed us out onto the still water through curtains of cold, hanging mist. I remember lying awake in the dark loft above the kitchen, listening to her start a small fire in the iron cook stove before she whispered for me to come down. We soaked worms and brought home stringers of bluegill and perch for breakfast. I still filet fish the way she taught me, and I now filet them for her as her eighty year old eyes are failing.

When I was ten, I graduated to a Mitchell 300 and a South Bend fiberglass rod. I also graduated to my second fishing mentor. Asher Pacht was a friend and the father of a family we vacationed with in the Eagle River years. He was an obsessive Muskie hunter and was always happy to have me holding down the bow. I was mesmerized by his tackle box and soon began filling one of my own, (the one I still take lake fishing). I remember Asher telling me, as I was clipping on the sixth lure in as many minutes, "one trick to catching fish is to keep your line in the water...". I still hear that advice when the fishing is slow and my patience waning. The first game fish I caught was a 25 inch Northern. I distinctly remember the feel of it, my uncertainty and excitement, saying to Asher, "it's either a fish or a wiggly weed". His delight was equal to mine as we netted her. My third fishing mentor, Jim Comfort, found me poking around his dock on the gulf coast of Florida when I was twelve. He was a retired school bus driver, fond of kids and had a lot of time on his hands. He taught me how to chum, rig cut bait and stay prepared for any of the astonishing things that might take your line in the ocean. I caught a huge

live Conch on brine shrimp with him. We were convinced I was hauling up a boot-full of sand.

Myron Kebus is a veterinarian and a specialist in fish health. He fishes with the gear his Mom bought him in grade school and he can identify any species of fish in Lake Mendota by their dull shadow passing beneath the boat. He's also the best story teller I know, and he taught me how to ice fish. Story telling is important in ice fishing, and more likely to be what you remember from those absurd tip-up stakeouts at 20 below. Myron described, in detail, the way a pike will toy with smelt before reorienting it to swallow and gravely intoned, "NEVER RUN to your tip up unless you really need to warm up."

Finally, there is Bill Maund - A longtime SWTU chapter member, and well known to many of you. Bill and I worked together at Wisconsin Public Television for years and had become good friends by the time I got over my fear of fly fishing. I wasn't afraid of fast water, tiny flies or the beautiful cast. I was fishing nearly every day then, and I was afraid I'd have to quit my job and live in my car. Bill taught me how to cast in Studio A, the cavernous space where we produce most of our local programming. The ceiling is probably 40 feet high and proved a bit too low at first... With good humor and obvious delight, Bill covered the basics: proper outfitting of the vest, (the requisite "danglies" as he calls them), netting tiny insects out of the current, playing and releasing fish, sprawling on the sun warmed bank to tell a good story or take a nap. He accompanied me to Dorn Hardware to select basic fly tying gear and then sat in the car with my cheap, new vise in his lap and demonstrated, of all things, the Elk hair Caddis. We were fishing the Mecan together, through a sweltering, breathless dusk, when I caught my first "keeper" Brown. We have fished through fragrant springtime valleys, stinging driven sleet and everything in between. They are always good days. They always end too soon.

I have loved to fish since I was a child and have spent thousands of happy hours at it. It is the relationships made along the way that preserve the best of those days in memory.

As Chapter President, I have two primary goals in addition to the on-going conservation work we are defined by: the first, and most personal, is to attend to building and sustaining volunteer leadership, (including mentoring programs) and the second is to focus our efforts to evolve long term funding strategies. You'll be hearing more about both in future NewsCast issues. I am honored to be working for and with this great chapter and thank you all for your trust and good will.

The Fladermouse Story

By Bill Flader



No, it's not a mis-spelling of a Strauss (Johann, not John) opera involving a man dressed as a fledermaus (flying mouse, or bat) for a costume ball. But in a way, it COULD be considered a flying mouse (or a portion thereof) "flying" at the end of a leader to a trout.

To back up a few years, I once obtained a few gray nymphs, with muskrat dubbing, from John Gray, and used them with good success, probably on Timber Coulee. Somehow the idea of trying mouse hair instead of muskrat emerged, and with an attic trap line already established, a supply was at hand.

As with rabbit stew, the recipe begins: First you catch a mouse. By holding the trap with your left hand you clip off tufts of hair with a small scissors, starting at the tail end, never needing to touch the critter. A few seconds in a garage-sale coffee bean grinder mixes the hair to a very finely-textured fluff, which dubs easily. I've used a size 14 2XL or 3XL nymph hook, copper wire for ribbing, 12-14 turns of .020 lead wire for added weight, and a coppery-red thread for the tapered head. These have worked remarkably well on our spring creeks, as well as on bluegills and even one huge Lake Michigan carp.

When I tied one on a bit of tippet and observed it in a glass of water, it had captured a few sparkly air bubbles, (possibly adding to its effectiveness?). Then when I made the mistake of laying it on the kitchen counter to dry, my wife almost pounced on it, thinking it was another pesky box elder bug. If it fooled my wife, no wonder it works on fish!

German Valley Creek 2004 TRM Project By Pat Sutter

DNR Aquatic Biologist Dave Marshall and Watershed Planner Jim Amrhein presented German Valley Creek (Gordon Creek Watershed) for consideration in the 2004 Targeted Resource Management (TRM) program administered by the Dane County Land Conservation Department (LCD). The proposed project is located in Blue Mounds and Perry Townships, and runs approximately 4.3 miles from Mayflower Road to County Highway Z. The Dane County Land Conservation Committee accepted this proposal, and made application for this grant in spring of 2003. The LCD applied for and

received a grant from the DNR for \$150,000 for this project.

A local work group comprised of LCD, DNR, landowners and operators, Upper Sugar River Watershed Association, Trout Unlimited, and the Blue Mounds Area Project helped develop a management plan to detail the goals and objectives of this project. Streambank protection and fish habitat restoration will be prioritized on the stream system. The LCD and DNR fish management staff will provide the administration and technical support for the project installation.

The following organizations will provide in-kind labor and funds to be used as match for the \$150,000 TRM grant: TU (\$63,000 in-kind labor), DNR (\$10,000 trout stamp), and NRCS WHIP funds (\$62,000). The main source for in-kind labor comes from the construction of 321 LUNKER structures. TU will receive a 20-year, 33-foot-wide easement on the project area for public access. Total estimated length of stream restoration is 4.3 miles.

The construction portion of this project will be completed by November 2004. Practices to be installed include: 162 riprap weirs, 23,000 feet of shaping and seeding, 321 fish habitat structures, and 29 acres of critical area seeding.

Lotsa Lunkers Needed

German Valley creek is an important tributary to the Gordon Creek watershed, and lies just south of Mt. Horeb. Since the stream runs out of Dane County and into Iowa County, it could be considered homewaters for Trout Unlimited members belonging to either the Southern Wisconsin Chapter, the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter, or the Blackhawk Chapter. The Harry and Laura Nohr chapter has taken the lead on this project, but we have a strong interest here too. This stream lies within 30 minutes of the Isthmus, and our help is desperately needed in order to construct the 321 lunker structures prescribed for this project.

Workdays have been scheduled for Saturday and Sunday April 3rd & 4th and again on Saturday and Sunday April 17th & 18th. Each workday will feature a morning shift from 8:30 AM until noon, and an afternoon shift from 1:00 PM until 5:00 PM. Lunch will be served at noon.

The worksite is located near the intersection of County Highway E and Mayflower road. Madison workers should travel west on Highway 18-151 past Mt. Horeb, then south on County E for about 4 miles. Look for a lot of lumber piled near a creek – you can't miss it. Please call Steve Fabos at (608) 967-2149 to let him know when you plan to attend.

Important dates to remember:

March 5th – 7th Lodi Reads Leopold at the Lodi Public Library
March 6th Early Trout Season Opens
March 9 March Madness Auction
March 27th Chapter Workday
April 3rd & 4th Build Lunger Structures for German Valley Project
April 12th Spring Wildlife & Fish Rules Hearings and Annual Conservation Congress Meeting
April 13th Chapter Meeting Featuring Cajun Angling Wisdom from Greg Vodak
April 17th Casting Clinic
April 17th & 18th Build Lunger Structures for German Valley Project
April 24th Black Earth Creek Clean Up Day
June 12th Special Needs Fishing Day

Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited Leadership:

President	Susan Fey	(608) 442-5801	
Vice President	Jack Way	(608) 222-2461	
Secretary	John Serunian	(608) 277-9295	
Treasurer	John Schweiger	(608) 238-8062	
Past President	Bill Pielsticker	(608) 592-4718	
State Council Rep.	Greg Vodak	(608) 873-5107	
Newscasts Editor	Mark Maffitt	(608) 273-2140	Mark.Maffitt@Invitrogen.com